

Heber Committee Gains, May Save Tabernacle

Special to The Tribune

HEBER — Wasatch LDS Stake's historic Tabernacle, scheduled for destruction to make way for a new, bigger building, can be preserved — if conditions set by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints can be met.

MRS. RUTH WITT, leading the Committee for the Preservation of the Wasatch Stake Tabernacle, said Wednesday LDS Church officials had offered the building to what it termed "responsible persons" in Heber Valley providing (1) another site could be found for construction of a new stake center and (2) some useful purpose could be found for the old building.

Church estimates had put the cost of renovating the building substantially higher than the cost of a new building, Dr. Everett L. Cooley, director of the Utah State Historical Society, said.

THE TABERNACLE, built of red sandstone cut from the hills around Heber and carried by horse-drawn wagons to the site,

committee voted that the building could not be kept as a stake tabernacle. But if the Wasatch group could procure property for a new stake center, the committee agreed the church would turn the old building over to responsible persons.

ORIGINAL PLANS called for the building to be torn down with contracts to be let Aug. 12. On the request of Mrs. Witt and her committee, church officials granted a 30-day extension, Mrs. Witt said.

Calls for help went out to the Utah Historical Society, Recreation and Parks Commission, Utah Tourist and Publicity Council, Heber City Council, Midway Board of Trustees and the Wasatch County Commission, Mrs. Witt said.

ALL THESE organizations, with Dr. Cooley and Mrs. Witt as leaders, worked to convince officials of the need for preserving the building.

"What we wanted to accomplish has been accomplished," Mrs. Witt said.

Time Left To Save Building

HEBER CITY—Citizens hoping to save the old Wasatch Stake Tabernacle were granted an extension of time Wednesday in which to raise money for purchase of an alternate site.

"The committee has been given an additional two weeks," President Hugh B. Brown, first counselor if the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, said Thursday.

Wasatch Stake President J. Harold Call met with President Brown Wednesday afternoon and the decision was made at that time, President Brown said.

FUNDS COMING

Dr. Everett Cooley, director of the Utah State Historical Society, said "money is still coming in, and we have received calls asking if it is too late to contribute." Anyone who wishes to send contributions may still do so, Dr. Cooley said.

Contributions for the purchase of new property which would save the historical landmark may be mailed to First Security Bank of Heber or to the Utah Historical Society in Salt Lake City, Dr. Cooley said.

1,400 ON PETITION

Providing that the building is not saved by the effort, contributions will be returned to donors, Dr. Cooley said.

The stake had planned to tear down the old tabernacle to make way for a new building. A petition signed by 1,400 Wasatch County residents and other persons interested in saving the structure started a move to delay destruction of the landmark. The State Historical Society backed the crusade to save the building.

The new building will be a combined structure for Wasatch Stake Center and meeting place for Heber Second and Fifth Wards. Purchase price for an alternate site has been listed at \$60,000.

Save Landmarks as Part of Heritage

Whatever the final outcome of the "Save the Heber Tabernacle" drive, its momentum should stimulate a statewide program of preserving historical landmarks.

As has been the case in similar instances, public concern over razing the splendid old Wasatch Stake building was not aroused until after plans were complete for replacing it with a new structure. When official minds are made up and funds committed, it is difficult to apply the brakes to modernization projects, however misguided. In the case of the Heber Tabernacle, a committee belatedly undertook to raise \$60,000 in private donations to provide a suitable alternate location for the new stakehouse.

Society Launches Survey

The Utah State Historical Society and cooperating groups now plan a comprehensive survey of the state to identify other landmarks and historical sites with the aim of saving them from the wrecking crews. Special attention should be given public and church buildings. It is hoped that, following the example of the National Park Service, the Utah groups will put up suitable markers at buildings deemed especially worthy of preserving and set in motion the forces of public opinion necessary to discourage unnecessary destruction of historic or architecturally notable structures.

An old stake tabernacle in south-

central Utah reportedly is in danger of being razed to make room for a new building. It is possible that if reached early enough, authorities can be persuaded to repair the structure without changing its basic architecture. It might then become an attraction for tourists and history-minded individuals.

Many Cities Active

Seventy cities throughout the U.S., 20 of them getting programs under way this last year, have adopted legislation to protect landmarks and historic sites. In many cases funds for surveys, restorations and repair work come mainly from private sources.

Impetus for such preservation programs comes from the National Park Service, which, under its "Mission 66" program, is designating and registering historic buildings, sites and scenic areas of exceptional merit. Two Salt Lake City buildings, the Beehive House and Lion House, residences of early-day presidents of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, are among the 548 declared eligible for the national landmark registry. A number of other sites and buildings in Utah are worthy of similar attention.

Other stimulus comes from the worldwide campaign of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which designated 1964 as International Monuments Year. The Utah Historical Society expects to sponsor a program in November in keeping with the UNESCO efforts.

Preserving Landmarks

Several buildings will surely be lost unless prompt action is taken to designate them as landmarks and preliminary steps taken for their protection. This does not mean that every old structure can be saved, but surely a fair representation in various communities of the state should be preserved.

The "Save the Heber Tabernacle" campaign could well grow into a strong "Save the Utah Landmarks" movement.

HISTORICAL SITE PRESERVATION

Des News 22A 11-16-64

In order to stimulate interest in preservation of Utah's landmarks, the Utah State Historical Society will sponsor a lecture Thursday, Everett L. Cooley, director, has announced.

Elder Alvin R. Dyer, assistant to the Council of Twelve, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, will speak on "Church Policy Concerning Preservation of Historic Sites and Buildings."

The lecture will be at 7:45 p.m. in the new public library, 500 S. 400 East.

Following, Fred L. Markham, liaison of Historic Buildings in the preservation officer for historic State of Utah. The chapter of Utah American Institute of Archi- "Utah Landmark Celebration Week," Nov. 8-14,

21 Nov 1964 Tribune

Historic Sites, Books Akin, LDS Council Aide Asserts

"Historic sites are akin to history books in that the material should be kept simple and geared to the singular purpose at hand."

That was the message Thursday night of Alvin R. Dyer, assistant to the Council of Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and author of a book of the history of the Mormons in Missouri.

The Provo architect said a major problem facing Utah in preservation of buildings is that we have not been here long enough for buildings to develop a feeling of veneration.

150 Attend





FATE DECIDED— The Wasatch Stake Tabernacle will be razed after a decision reached by the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The decision was reached after The "Save the Tabernacle" Committee failed in their efforts.

Fate of Stake Tabernacle Decreed by Presidency

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Office of the First Presidency
Salt Lake City 11, Utah

November 20, 1964

President J Harold Call
Wasatch Stake
255 West Center
Heber, Utah

Dear President Call:

On September 10, 1964, you were advised that a committee from Heber City were granted an extension of time before starting to raze the present Wasatch Stake Tabernacle.

This extension was granted for the purpose of allowing the committee to:

1. See if they could provide a suitable site for the erection of a new stake center in exchange for the present Wasatch Stake Tabernacle property.
2. Make provision for the repair and perpetual maintenance of the present tabernacle.

Since the extension of time has now expired and since the committee from Heber City have been unable to meet the above requirements, you are hereby authorized and directed to move forward with the original plans to raze the present stake buildings and construct a new two-ward and stake center under the direction of the Church Building Committee.

Faithfully your brethern,

DAVID O. McKAY

HUGH B. BROWN

N. ELDON TANNER

The First Presidency

Department wish each of you and yours a very Merry Christmas.

Wave 3 Dec 1964

Tabernacle Given Time Extension

Heber City's Tabernacle will remain on the skyline, at least for the present, according to word released over media from Salt Lake City.

A stay of execution was given the building which has been slated for demolition to make room for a new two-ward stake center replacing the pioneer structure.

Final decision as to the future of the building was set ahead until spring by church authorities due to pressure being brought by organizations interested in trying to preserve the historical building.

The "stay" is one of several granted the Save the Tabernacle Committee by the Church officials in order that the committee can arrive at a workable solution towards saving the building.

by the head dietician had caught the disease
Provo Herald 16 Dec 1964

Heber Tabernacle To Be Demolished

HEBER — Wasatch LDS Stake President Harold Call said today he has received a letter from the First LDS Presidency authorizing him to proceed with the destruction of the Wasatch Stake Tabernacle.

The letter apparently dooms to failure a long fight on the part of a number of citizens to save the building. Plans call for erection of a new stake center and facilities for two wards on the site of the present building.

The tabernacle was erected in 1877.